



Garbe Weighs the Benefits of a Major Career Change

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Editor's Note: This is part of a series of feature stories highlighting DATCP programs and the people who work with them.

MADISON – As a Weights and Measures Inspector for the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), Jay Garbe tends to think in ounces and pounds. It's a far cry from when he used to work in teaspoons and tablespoons.

A culinary arts graduate of Fox Valley Technical College, Garbe worked as a chef and kitchen manager prior to joining the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) eight years ago.

What brought Garbe from the heat of the kitchen?

"I was burned out from constantly working the late nights, weekends and holidays, and I needed to find stable work with possibilities for advancement," said Garbe. "I took the civil service exam and found my way out. I was excited to find a job that I felt could be the base of a lasting career."

Garbe initially joined DATCP as a consumer protection investigator in the former Green Bay and Milwaukee offices. In that role, he was responsible for digging into the details of consumers' complaints and examining whether businesses had violated state laws in these transactions.

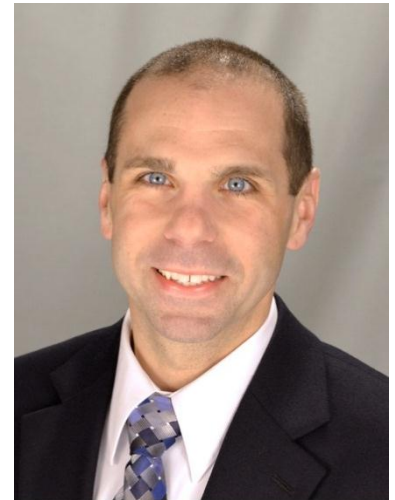
Because Garbe also holds a bachelor's degree in public administration from UW-Green Bay, the notion of working with businesses to help them stay accountable to the people of Wisconsin was a carryover from his public administration studies.

"The position as a consumer protection investigator seemed like it was right up my alley given my public administration background, so when I was offered the position in the Green Bay office, I jumped at the chance," said Garbe.

After spending five years with DATCP's Consumer Protection Bureau, Garbe took a position as a weights and measures inspector with the agency. Three years later, he finds that the investigation skills he developed in consumer protection translate well to weights and measures inspections. As an added bonus, he finds that he particularly enjoys the variety of working environments that comes with this position.

"My office is a truck with 500 pounds of weights, a marine cart for gas pump testing, various scales and a scanner gun," said Garbe. "The diversity of responsibilities I have in this weights and measures job keeps my work interesting, and I like the fact that I often conduct many different types of inspections at several locations each day."

In any given day, Garbe might test the accuracy of retail gas pumps; verify the accuracy of price scanners; inspect propane meters or check a mobile air conditioning repair business for proper licensing and equipment. Over the course of a couple of hours, Garbe could go from inspecting large vehicle scales to testing small scales used to measure retail goods at a grocery store, deli or coffee shop.



Jay Garbe, a Weights and Measures Inspector at DATCP, works to ensure a fair marketplace in Wisconsin by verifying the accuracy of gas pumps, scales and price scanners throughout the state.

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Above all, Garbe believes in the value of the services that the weights and measures team provides to Wisconsin residents, and he takes pride in ensuring a fair marketplace where consumers get what they pay for.

“If the weights and measures team weren’t here, it’s possible you could pay for a gallon of gas and only get a half gallon or pay for a pound of cheese but only get 2/3 of a pound,” said Garbe.

“Having worked as a chef, I know that’s a problem,” he joked.

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